

**NGO Presentation at NPT PrepCom 2008**  
**Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, friends, ladies and gentlemen,  
My name is Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of the City of Hiroshima, and President of Mayors for Peace.

I would like to ask your indulgence in changing the order in which we speak to accommodate a Belgian City that needs one of my colleagues within hours. And therefore, our presentation precedes our good young friends, and I appreciate your cooperation very much. It is an honor for me to speak in front of this august body.

I recall that almost exactly five years ago, here in the Palais, I addressed you as I am doing today. I announced that Mayors for Peace would be launching an emergency campaign to ban nuclear weapons. During these five years the membership of Mayors for Peace has more than quadrupled. In January this year we proudly declared 2020 Mayors for the 2020 Vision. Today we have more than 2200 city members, with two or three cities joining us every day, and we are entering the third phase of our campaign. My colleagues, whom I will introduce shortly, will describe how we foresee the lead-up to the 2010 Review Conference and the decade beyond. I am here to assure you that we have not lost sight of, or enthusiasm for, our objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world by the year 2020. As a matter of fact, our effort has been intensified and has become more vigorous as the average age of *hibakusha*, the survivors of the atomic bombings, has exceeded 74. I invite you to attend our lunchtime session tomorrow, entitled, *2010-2020: from Survival to Success* to hear and discuss our plans in greater detail.

Mr. Chairman,

Today I am asking this body to perform the God-like act of creating time. Unless you give us the time we need, we will be unable to tackle the Earth-threatening environmental issues and other serious problems that confront us. You have the power. In fact, it is your obligation to give us this time. That is the intention of the international community as set forth in the NPT and confirmed by the Advisory Opinion the ICJ handed down in 1996, which clearly stipulates that all governments are “under obligation to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.” Without nuclear disarmament soon, we will have no time to solve our other real problems.

The two most serious immediate threats to human evolution are environmental degradation and weapons of mass destruction. Our collective need to curb human capacity for violence and destructive effects on our ecosystem demands a rapid and decisive shift away from selfish, competitive struggles for dominance toward mutual, cooperative problem solving. And yet, the only phenomenon more obvious than this pressing need is the utter inability of national governments to respond with anything that even resembles a solution to these problems. Mayors for Peace is growing because cities are drawn into the vacuum created by failure at the national level to accept reality.

Hiroshima, responding to the most reliable scientific recommendations we have received, is committed to reducing our CO2 emissions by 70% by the year 2050. We are doing this because it is necessary, regardless of national-level irresponsibility, and we are not alone. Around the world, cities are working to reduce emissions far beyond national requirements. They do this at great risk to their local economies because their residents want to do what is right. In order for us to complete the now sprouting effort worldwide to curb global warming, let me repeat: we need time.

Unfortunately, the public remains largely unaware of the danger of nuclear weapons. They are unaware that certain nuclear-weapon states are developing tactical nuclear weapons designed not for deterrence but for combat use. They are unaware that Arab League foreign ministers declared on March 8 that if Israel admits to having a nuclear weapon, the Arab states will drop out of the NPT and make weapons of their own. They are unaware that a low-level smuggler in Russia was recently found to be carrying highly enriched uranium. They are unaware that the NPT is on the brink of collapse and nuclear weapons are poised to spread swiftly throughout the world.

National governments certainly must be aware of the nuclear threat, but you act as if you have all the time in the world. Perhaps national leaders are high and mighty enough to assume they will survive any catastrophe that may occur. We mayors, however, live down in the valley with our people, where facts and reality play a far more powerful role in decision-making.

On October 31st, 2007, United Cities and Local Governments, representing cities throughout the world, took up the Mayors for Peace rallying cry. Declaring with us that "Cities Are Not Targets!" they expressed full support for our Campaign. This year, according to the UN Population Fund, the majority of humanity now resides in cities. Therefore, I can say with complete conviction that our message to you today is spoken on behalf of the majority of humanity. No governmental delegation here can rightfully make such a claim, so I respectfully ask that you heed our message.

In June 2006, the US Conference of Mayors, representing 1139 American cities, called on the United States and Russia to renounce their Cold War policies of Mutually Assured Destruction. The threat of inflicting grossly indiscriminate and disproportionate casualties among noncombatant populations has never been morally or legally acceptable, but with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a global terrorist threat, such a policy is utterly futile and foolhardy. At our urging, the US Conference of Mayors wrote to the Ambassadors of Russia and China asking them to openly declare that they would never again target US cities. They simultaneously asked the US Government to provide such assurances to Russian and Chinese cities. The cities of the world have lived far too long with the Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads. We demand its removal.

In February 2007, I wrote to the Heads of Government of the nine states thought to possess nuclear arms, asking them to explicitly rule out the targeting of cities and to

ensure that their armed forces were rigorously trained to disobey any order to use a nuclear weapon in lethal proximity of cities. Only one country had the courtesy to reply: the United Kingdom, perhaps because in July 2006 an international delegation of mayors had already begun a dialog with the UK Foreign Ministry on this subject.

Our written submission describes how this dialog developed. In the end, the British Government's response was that any discussion of what is not targeted would diminish the deterrent value of the nuclear weapons. So, rather than diminish a dangerous and obsolete deterrence policy, Britain placed itself on the wrong side of international law and in the morally reprehensible position of threatening what I have called "civicide", the obliteration of civic life and the endangerment of civilization itself.

In 2004 the US Conference of Mayors declared: "Weapons of mass destruction have no place in a civilized world." Why is it that national governments are unable to arrive at the same obvious conclusion?

I do not mean to single out Britain. The US declined any discussion of targeting policy based, no doubt, on similar delusions of deterrence; it could well be that, in their silence, Beijing, Delhi, Islamabad, Moscow, Pyongyang, and Tel Aviv share this delusion. They apparently consider the threat to annihilate whole cities to be acceptable and even necessary. We do not.

We have just heard from IPPNW about the catastrophic impact of a limited nuclear war. Only at the national level of abstraction and "all-out war" can anyone speak so blithely about one hundred cities being completely incinerated in a nuclear exchange in the Asian Subcontinent. We cities are the 'firewood' that has been unwittingly gathered by our civilizations for the great nuclear firestorms. In a world of cities, nuclear weapons endanger everyone, at least indirectly through catastrophic climate change. Why is it so difficult for national governments to come to grips with this reality and free us from this threat all together?

The Rand Corporation did a study for US Homeland Security on catastrophic terrorism. In choosing a city for destruction, the study picked Long Beach, California, the US megaport. What it found after 'gaming' the scenario 20 days out from the explosion was that in 20 days we would not even begin to get a handle on the GLOBAL ramifications of such an attack. The massive economic and social problems would continue to spread and intensify. The productivity of the US economy would sharply decline, drawing the entire world with it into economic turmoil and a deep depression.

Following the good example of The Rand Corporation and of IPPNW, the City of Hiroshima has recently conducted a similar scientific study of effects on the city if another nuclear weapon should be used in the City of Hiroshima. The result is utter disaster. And I will not go into details, but let me simply mention that the summary report conclusion is available for you from my staff in this hall. The Rand study, the IPPNW study and the Hiroshima study all confirmed what Mayor Itoh of Nagasaki said at the 2004 PrepCom. "Civilization and nuclear weapons cannot co-exist indefinitely."

So why, when we know how high the stakes are, do we continue to gamble?! Why should cities and the whole world economy be held hostage to this madness even one day longer?

We are preparing for the UN Disarmament Decade as if our lives depend on it. I challenge each one of you to strive in good faith to match our sense of urgency and purpose. You know as well as I do that unless strong, substantive moves toward disarmament are made in the next two years, nuclear weapons will spread throughout the world. The decision is upon you. Will you act in good faith to eliminate these heinous and totally unnecessary threats to our survival, or will you allow them to spread, most certainly to be used? If you do not move effectively to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020, you will be partially responsible for the nuclear catastrophe I have no doubt will befall us before that date. I urge you not to underestimate the gravity and urgency of this decision.

And let me repeat our plea: please create time; time that will give our children and their children a chance. To complete the Mayors for Peace presentation, I would like to introduce two of my colleagues: Mayor Luc Dehaene of Ypres, Belgium, and Patrick Vankrunkelsven of the Laakdal City Council. And finally, thank you for your precious time.